

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please AMEND claims 1 to 5, 7 to 9, and 12 to 14 and ADD claim 16, as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A sheet material ~~information-detecting~~ information-acquiring apparatus comprising:
 - a sheet feeding unit ~~means~~ for feeding an anisotropic sheet material;
 - a correcting unit ~~means~~ for correcting the position of the fed sheet material to bring the orientation direction of the constituting material of the sheet material to be in a prescribed direction relative to the feed direction of the sheet material;
 - an external force applying unit ~~means~~ for applying an external force to the sheet material in the corrected position, wherein the applied external force is a mechanical force;
 - ~~signal-detecting means for detecting signal from the sheet material; and~~
 - an information-acquiring unit ~~means~~ for acquiring information for changing a printing mode based on the stress caused by the applied external force in the sheet material.
2. (Currently Amended) The sheet material ~~information-detecting~~ information-acquiring apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a signal-detecting unit for detecting a signal from the sheet material, wherein the apparatus further comprises a sheet material sensor for sensing interaction of the external force applying unit ~~means~~ and the signal-detecting unit ~~means~~ with the sheet material.

3. (Currently Amended) The sheet material ~~information-detecting~~ information-acquiring apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the sheet material sensor detects the state or position of the sheet material.

4. (Currently Amended) The sheet material ~~information-detecting~~ information-acquiring apparatus according to claim ~~[[1]]~~ 2, wherein the sheet information-acquiring ~~means~~ unit acquires information by comparison of the result of the detection by the signal-detecting ~~means~~ unit with data.

5. (Currently Amended) The sheet material ~~information-detecting~~ information-acquiring apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the sheet information-acquiring unit ~~means~~ acquires information on the sheet material by comparison of the result of detection by ~~the~~ a signal-detecting ~~means~~ unit with data for directions of the sheet material.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) The sheet material ~~information-detecting~~ information-acquiring apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the mechanical external force is one of plural ~~times of~~ impacts at different collision velocities.

8. (Currently Amended) The sheet material ~~information-detecting~~ information-acquiring apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the external force is one of

vibrations having different frequency components.

9. (Currently Amended) The sheet material ~~information-detecting~~ information-acquiring apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a restricting member is provided for restricting the region of displacement of the sheet material on application of the external force.

10-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) The sheet material ~~information-detecting~~ information-acquiring apparatus according to claim 1, ~~wherein the~~ further comprising a signal-detecting ~~means is~~ unit comprised of a material having a piezoelectric property.

13. (Currently Amended) A sheet-material treating apparatus, comprising the sheet material ~~information-detecting~~ information-acquiring apparatus set forth in claim 1, and a sheet material-treating assembly for treating the sheet material by utilizing the information obtained by the sheet ~~information-detecting~~ material information-acquiring apparatus.

14. (Currently Amended) A sheet material feeding unit comprising the sheet material ~~information-detecting~~ information-acquiring apparatus set forth in claim 1, and a driving assembly for the sheet material feeding means.

15. (Previously presented) A process for acquiring information on an anisotropic sheet material, comprising the steps of:

correcting the position of a fed sheet material to bring the orientation direction of the constituting material of the sheet material to be in a prescribed direction relative to the feed direction of the sheet material;

applying a mechanical external force to the sheet material in the corrected position; and

acquiring information on the stress caused by the applied external force in the sheet material.

16. (New) A sheet material-treating apparatus comprising:

a sheet feeding unit for feeding an anisotropic sheet material;

a correcting unit for correcting the position of the fed sheet material to bring the orientation direction of the constituting material of the sheet material to be in a prescribed direction relative to the feed direction of the sheet material;

an external force applying unit for applying an external force to the sheet material in the corrected position, wherein the applied external force is a mechanical force;

an information-acquiring unit for acquiring information on a stress caused by the applied external force in the sheet material; and

a sheet material-treating unit for changing a printing mode according to the acquired information.